

Message Text

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S E C R E T TEHRAN 7517

NODIS CHEROKEE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS IR IS
SUBJ: ISRAELI-IRAN ARMS CO-PRODUCTION

REF SECTO 9010

1. REFTEL INSTRUCTS ME TO TELL IRANIANS THAT, IN OUR VIEW, LONG-RANGE SURFACE TO SURFACE MISSILE CO-PRODUCTION ARRANGEMENT WITH ISRAEL WOULD BE "UNDESIRABLE". IN ORDER CONVEY THIS MESSAGE TO GENERAL TOUFANIAN, I WILL NEED MORE DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS.

2. FIRST, I WILL NEED TO KNOW WHETHER "LONG-RANGE" REFERS ONLY TO THE 500-KM MISSILE. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT THE PACKAGE INVOLVES BOTH A 75-KM RANGE AND A 500-KM RANGE WEAPON. AM I CORRECT IN UNDERSTANDING THAT ONLY THE 500-KM WEAPON IS CONSIDERED "UNDESIRABLE"?

3. SECOND, I WILL NEED TO KNOW THE GROUNDS ON WHICH WE
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FIND THE PROPOSAL UNDESIRABLE. IS IT BECUAS WE FEAR THAT KNOWLEDGE OF SUCH A CO-PRODUCTION SCHEME WOULD UPSET POLITCAL BALANCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST? OR IS IT BECAUSE WE CONSIDER THE INTRODUCTION OF SUCH A WEAPON INTO IRAN WOULD UPSET THE MILITARY BALANCE, SPECIFICALLY WITH IRAQ?

4. THIRD, HOW SHOULD IRAN INTERPRET THE WORD "UNDESIRABLE"?

REFTEL POINTS OUT THAT, IN ABSENCE U.S. COMPONENTS, WE HAVE NO LEGAL GROUNDS FOR BLOCKING THE CO-PRODUCTION SCHEME. THE SHAH UNDERSTANDS THIS, BUT WISHES TO KNOW IF WE WILL RAISE "OBJECTIONS." HE OBVIOUSLY HAS IN MIND THE SORTS OF ACTION WE HAVE TAKEN VIS-A-VIS PAKISTAN WITH RESPECT TO ITS REPROCESSING PLANT. I THEREFORE NEED TO KNOW WHETHER OUR POSITION IS MERELY THAT WE WOULD DEPRECATE THE CO-PRODUCTION, OR WHETHER WE SEEK ACTIVELY TO IMPEDE ITS REALIZATION.

5. ON BALANCE, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE MOST FEASIBLE APPROACH WOULD BE FOR ME TO TELL TOUFANIAN THAT WE WILL RAISE NO RPT NO OBJECTION TO THE CO-PRODUCTION OF THE 75-KM MISSILE, WHICH COULD BE DEFINED AS DEFENSIVE WITHIN A NARROW BELT ON IRAN'S FRONTIERS. SUCH A WEAPON WOULD NOT, FOR EXAMPLE, REACH BAGHDAD OR KIRKUK.

6. ON THE OTHER HAND, I COULD TELL TOUFANIAN THAT WE WOULD ACTIVELY OPPOSE CO-PRODUCTION OF THE 500-KM MISSILE BECAUSE IT WOULD NOT ONLY COVER NEARLY ALL OF IRAQ BUT WOULD ALSO BRING SAUDI ARABIAN OIL FIELDS WITHIN ITS RANGE. I FEEL IT WOULD BE USEFUL IN OUR CONTINUING RELATIONS OF CONFIDENTIALITY WITH IRAN TO BE TOTALLY CANDID ON THIS LATTER POINT.

7. I REALIZE SECRETARY IS HEAVILY ENGAGED IN CHINA AND HAS PRECIOUS LITTLE TIME FOR EXTRANEIOUS MATTERS. HOWEVER, I
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WILL BE SEEING TOUFANIAN IN CONJUNCTION WITH GENERAL FISH VISIT AUGUST 24 AND WOULD VERY MUCH APPRECIATE ELABORATION ON MY INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE THEN.

8. DEPT PLEASE REPEAT URGENTLY TO SECRETARY AND AMBASSADOR LEWIS.
SULLIVAN

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NNN

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